

RICHARD NAGY LTD

THE SILVERMAN COLLECTION

5th October – 24th November 2012

An exceptional collection of works by prominent 20th Century German and Austrian artists, acquired by American collector Benedict Silverman, will be presented for the first time at Richard Nagy in London this autumn.

The Silverman Collection, worth over \$100 million, is one of the most important private collections of 20th Century German and Austrian art in the world. It comprises artistic gems from the Viennese Secession by Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka, as well as astonishing *Wiener Werkstätte* furniture by Koloman Moser and Carl Otto Czeschka. It also features an exceptional group of drawings by Alfred Kubin and major works by the German Expressionists Georg Grosz, Otto Dix, Ludwig Meidner, Oskar Schlemmer and Max Beckmann.

Richard Nagy comments: 'I am delighted to bring this extraordinary collection to London. It is a rare opportunity to see masterpieces which have travelled to the most prestigious museums in the world – the Neue Galerie, MoMA, the Albertina, the Belvedere, and the Beyeler Foundation, as well as important museums in Korea, Japan and Australia – but never presented as one man's collection.'

The German Expressionists were witnesses of a changing world, the end of an epoch leading to Modernism. They were politically engaged in a sardonic criticism of German society, depicting the fragility of bourgeois life in Weimar Germany. In the Otto Dix painting *Self Portrait With a Model* (1923), the female figure is thrust into the foreground, naked and exposed, while Dix stands beside her fully clothed, seemingly unaffected by the proximity and vitality of her naked presence. The model here represents the idea of truth-to-nature, a concept that was very important to Dix at the time.

George Grosz's *Tempo der Strasse* (1918), is a kaleidoscopic cross-section of Berlin rendered in a Cubo-Futurist style. The work depicts the city night as a dark and frenzied psychological onslaught of exhilarating sights, sounds and sensations. The painting is one of a series of era-defining oil paintings of Berlin that Grosz made during the turbulent last years of the First World War when Germany was slowly sinking towards catastrophe.

One of the most striking pieces in the collection, *The Round Table* (1917), is a visionary painting by Austrian artist Egon Schiele, Klimt's protégé, who died in 1918. This was his last great project. The work attempts to fuse Schiele's allegorical sense of his own sacred mission as an artist with what he hoped would be the new political realities of a post-war Austria. The precise identity of all the figures in the painting will probably never be settled, but it is obvious that Schiele wanted to draw a clear parallel between the gathering of his artist friends sharing a meal and the spiritual symbolism of the Last Supper.

Another remarkable work is the 1911 oil on canvas *Ria Munk* painted by Gustav Klimt. Ria Munk, the daughter of an Austrian Jewish industrialist, committed suicide in 1911 at the age of 24 because of an unhappy love affair. Well acquainted with the Munk family, Klimt executed this portrait upon Ria's death and presented the painting as a gift to her parents. Ria's mother later commissioned Klimt to create a different posthumous version depicting her daughter alive.

Notes to the Editor

Benedict Silverman, born 1929, is an American financier and philanthropist. In 1993, he founded The Literacy Trust, a charitable not-for-profit educational foundation supporting *Reading Rescue*, a programme designed for children who need the most intensive form of intervention. Beside his philanthropic and professional involvement, Silverman has built several major collections: the finest collection of French Art Nouveau furniture (primarily Hector Guimard and Louis Majorelle), a comprehensive collection of Tiffany lamps and glass and *Wiener Werkstätte* furniture, and most importantly, an exceptional collection of 20th Century Austrian and German art of quality formed with an eccentric and discerning eye.

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